

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the non-final Office Action dated June 26, 2008, issued in connection with the above-identified application. Claims 1-4 and 7-28 are all the claims pending in the present application. With this Response, no claims have been amended, and no new matter has been introduced. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4, 7, 10-14 and 17-28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schwartz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,801,767, hereafter “Schwartz”) in view of Ichibangase et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0114042, hereafter “Ichibangase”). The Applicants assert that Schwartz in view of Ichibangase fails to disclose or suggest the features of at least independent claims 1 and 28. Specifically, claim 1, in relevant part, recites the following:

“[a] wireless access system using Carrier Sense Multiple Access for Media Access Control of a host device using a plurality of terminals, the wireless access system comprising:
... an access control section for transmitting the downstream optical signal received from the master station to the plurality of slave stations via the optical fiber transmission line, and transmitting the upstream optical signal transmitted from the any one of the plurality of slave stations to the master station and to all other slave stations of the plurality of slave stations via the optical fiber transmission line.” (Emphasis added).

The features emphasized above in independent claim 1 are similarly recited in independent claim 28. Specifically, claim 28 is a corresponding method having steps performed by the access control section of claim 1. Additionally, the above features are fully supported by the Applicants’ disclosure (see, e.g., Fig 1 and pgs. 24-28).

In the Office Action, the Examiner relied on Schwartz in view of Ichibangase for disclosing or suggesting all the features recited in claims 1 and 28. Specifically, the Examiner indicates that Schwartz discloses or suggests all the features of independent claims 1 and 28 except for the claimed access control section and method recited respectively in the claims. The Examiner relies on Ichibangase for overcoming the deficiency noted above in Schwartz and for disclosing all the features of the claimed access control section and method. The Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner’s conclusions with regard to Ichibangase.

In the Office Action, the Examiner relies specifically on ¶57 and ¶12, Fig. 12, and Fig. 13 of Ichibangase. However, ¶57 and ¶12, Fig. 12, and Fig. 13 of Ichibangase merely disclose or suggest that an optical signal in the uplink direction, outputted from a slave station 120-1, is transmitted to the master station 110 via the optical splitter 134. In the downlink direction, optical signals including management information "G" are transmitted from the master station 110 to all of the slave stations 120-1, 120-2 and 120-3; and in the uplink direction, an optical signal using time slots based on the management information "G" is transmitted from each of the slave stations 120-1, 120-2 and 120-3 to the master station 110.

In other words, Ichibangase discloses that the optical signals for the downlink direction are transmitted from the master station 110 to all of the slave stations 120-1, 120-2 and 120-3 in a multicast manner, and the optical signal for the uplink direction is transmitted from each of the slave stations 120-1, 120-2 and 120-3 to the master station 110 in a unicast manner. The optical splitter 134 merely demultiplexes an optical signal from the master station 110 and multiplexes optical signals from the slave stations 120-1, 120-2 and 120-3.

Therefore, Ichibangase discloses that, for example, an optical signal "A" for the uplink direction, outputted from the slave station 120-1, is merely transmitted to the master station 110 via the optical splitter 134. Ichibangase fails to disclose or suggest that the optical signal "A" is looped back at the optical splitter 134 and transmitted to the slave stations 120-2 and 120-3.

In the an access control section and method of the present invention (as recited in claims 1 and 28), the uplink optical signal is outputted from the slave station 15 and is simultaneously transmitted to a master station 13 and other slave stations 15b and 15c to the master station 13 via an optical multiplexing/demultiplexing section 14. In other words, when an uplink optical signal is transmitted from any slave station, a looped-back optical signal from the optical multiplexing/demultiplexing section 14 is directly transmitted to the other slave stations 15b and 15c, and the master station 13.

Based on the above discussion, the present invention clearly differs from Ichibangase in that, in Ichibangase, the uplink signal outputted from a slave station is merely transmitted to the master station. Additionally, in Ichibangase, to transmit information regarding the optical signal to the other slave stations, it would be necessary for the master station to newly generate an

optical signal for the downlink direction (including this information) and transmit it to the other slave stations.

As described above, unlike the present invention, neither of Schwartz and Ichibangase disclose or suggest "transmitting the upstream optical signal transmitted from the any one of the plurality of slave stations to the master station and to all other slave stations of the plurality of slave stations." Thus, no combination of Schwartz and Ichibangase would result in, or otherwise render obvious, all the features of claim 1. Additionally, no combination of Schwartz and Ichibangase would result in, or otherwise render obvious, all the features of claims 2-4, 7, 10-14 and 17-27 at least by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1.

In the Office Action, claims 8 and 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schwartz in view of Ichibangase, and further in view of Kewitsch et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,909); and claims 15 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schwartz in view of Ichibangase, and further in view of Ishida et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,860,057).

Claims 8, 9, 15 and 16 depend from independent claim 1. As noted above, Schwartz and Ichibangase fail to disclose or suggest the features recited in independent claim 1. Additionally, Kewitsch and Ishida fail to overcome the deficiencies noted above in Schwartz and Ichibangase. Accordingly, no combination of Schwartz and Ichibangase with either Kewitsch or Ishida would result in, or otherwise render obvious, claims 8, 9, 15 and 16 at by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1.

In light of the above, the Applicants respectfully submit that all the pending claims are patentable over the prior art of record. The Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections presented in the Office Action dated June 26, 2008, and pass the present application to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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September 22, 2008